

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

VOL. I.

BOSTON, DECEMBER, 1892.

No. 7

THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

MONTHLY: 50 cents a year. Single copy, 5 cents.

Entered at the Boston, Mass., post-office as second-class mail matter, Nov. 14, 1892.

GEO. W. ELLIS, PRINTER, 141 FRANKLIN ST., BOSTON.

CONTENTS OF NO. 7.

"O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM!"	69
EXPECTATION OF CHRIST	69
THE SHEPHERDS	71
THE BIBLE CLASS	72
THE CLASS IN AMERICAN HISTORY	75
THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL	76
THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB	76
MISCELLANEOUS	79

"O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM!"

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light!
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee to-night.

For Christ is born of Mary;
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given:
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him still;
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray,
Cast out our sin and enter in,
Be born in us to-day!
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell:
Oh, come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord, Emmanuel!

—*Phillips Brooks.*

EXPECTATION OF CHRIST.

"And the desire of all nations shall come."—
HAGGAI ii. 7.

Had there been a universal desire for light from heaven, a conscious and urgent need of a messenger from God, he would, we may be sure, have come ages before the Christian era. It was to allow it time to discover its own inherent faculties, to feel the pressure of its nobler wants, the necessities of reason, conscience, and affection, that the gracious light of revelation was withheld and the Saviour reserved so long. For man is educated by want. That is the great method of divine providence.

That hour arrived, was the fulness of the times,—the times for which divine mercy was waiting. The moment Christ should be the desire of all nations he would come. We might be sure he lingered in the bosom of God for no other reason than because the world had no room for him in the heart he yearned to occupy and save.

Meanwhile, his withholding was the moral education of the world. Christ *promised* did for the Israelites what Christ *given* has done for us. "I would not ye should be ignorant," says Paul, in a most striking passage in Corinthians, "how that all our fathers were under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink (*as we*); for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ."

There was no nation on the earth to whom Christ could have been sent, with any advantage, at the remote period of his actual coming, except the Jews. They, indeed, crucified him, but not until they had heard his message and received it deep into hearts fully competent to communicate it. The

longings, prophecies, predictions, of ages, had not been all in vain. A few hearts in Judea were prepared, by that long discipline of centuries, to feel the greatness and preciousness of the gift God was bestowing, enough to begin the glorious circle which has now spread so fast and so far as to include our then unknown continent, our then unforeseen generations. Murderous and cruel as the Jews were, there was no country in the world but Palestine where Jesus could then have found even twelve disciples, no city but Jerusalem that would have allowed him to teach a year in its streets. God did not withhold his Son one moment from a world that would welcome him. He barely got a hearing after ages of expectation had been preparing for him. He came the first moment his coming could have been recognized.

We think perhaps that Christ is wholly come! Oh, no! my brethren, his revelation, his spirit, his message to the world, comes not yet fully to the birth. Born indeed in the flesh, he is not yet born into the world in the spirit. The deepest, richest part of his gospel is still hid! To what intent is he in the world, if the world knows him not? Is he not much as though he had never been to those who do not seek him and learn of him? Is not Christ as much a mystery, a name, a superstition, to thousands, dwelling in the very heart of Christendom, as though he were hid 1800 years deep in the future instead of being 1800 years old in the knowledge of the past? How do we who continue indifferent to his guidance materially differ from those who had no Saviour to turn to?

We perhaps flatter ourselves that if this were the eve of Christ's birth, if to-morrow were the identical day in which Christ was to be born in Bethlehem, we should be among those eagerly expecting him, among those preparing to carry gifts to his manger, certainly not among those who denied his weary mother a place in the inn, and who afterward fell into Herod's employ and sought the young child's life. Yet to-day is as truly the eve of Christ's birth as though eighteen centuries rolled back and placed us on the hills of Judea, among the shepherds tending their flocks by night, to whom the angels sang the first Christmas carol. The spiritual Christ is waiting to be born into

the heart of the world, and there is no room for him there. Humanity does not yet long for him, does not yet expect him, would not yet know him. For them he still sleeps in his mother's bosom, an unborn babe; and she, an unknown traveller, is turned from the door. Christ still lacks a birthplace; and Joseph and Mary yet appeal for a becoming shelter.

We wonder that Christ was withheld so long from the world. Why do we not wonder rather that he is still withheld? What matters it that his sacred feet have pressed our soil, if his mind and temper, the real objects of his mission, his blessed doctrines and promises, have not yet taken on a visible shape, and won the reverence and love of the world he came to save? St. Paul complains in effect that our Saviour still hangs upon the cross. And there he will hang, bleeding and in agony, until the world ceases from the murderous dispositions which originally put him there! We, too, complain that Christ is not yet born; that the nations still sit in heathen darkness, not even expecting the Messiah, or else only in half-intellectual Jewish longing, grieved and sad that he does not come. Oh, were he yet to come in the flesh, might we not have a less heavy heart than becomes us, when now it is only his spiritual birth into the world that we can hope for? For what triumphs of peace and purity, of brotherly love and truth and happiness, should we not associate with his personal appearing? We might naturally enough expect that glorious day to be the beginning of an all-triumphant era. But Christ has come in the flesh. Eighteen centuries have celebrated that wonderful event, and the world still gropes on in half-heathen ignorance and indifference,—believing in immortality, and living only in the present,—calling men their brethren, and treating them like thieves and robbers,—praising the Prince of Peace, and making war in Christ's name,—emblazoning his precepts in gold, and proclaiming his promises in temples more precious than Solomon's, yet breaking the commandments with their daily bread, and grieving his spirit with every breath they draw. What have we to comfort us under such a disappointment? Christ born! and the world neither glad nor pious? Christ is not born, then! The salvation of the world awaits his spiritual coming. He

must come in the proper understanding of his character; he must come in the actual love of his spirit; he must come as the accepted guide and orderer of society; must come in spirit and truth, before his birth will indeed have been accomplished! Now he is hid not indeed in his mother's heart, but in the womb of superstition and worldly misconception, in the indifference and apathy of society. Alas! neither ecclesiastical mummeries, nor theological formulas, nor sensible opinions, can bring Jesus Christ to the birth. He seeks some other Bethlehem than these to be born in. The pious Romanist, the conscientious Puritan, the pure but cold worshipper of reason, have each and all seen him in their private vigils, though he comes not to any class, and knows no sect or order. But he is born wherever love unfeigned is found; born into every heart that sincerely and tenderly suffers and labors for humanity; born in every peace-maker's spirit; born in every soul that rises above the power of selfishness and worldly greed, and uses its means and powers to promote the good of mankind; born where humility, gentleness, purity of body and soul, trust and submission, faith, hope, and charity, are seen to dwell.

But who can hope to see Christ or to know him to-morrow, who can look upon the gentle lineaments of that holy babe as he sleeps in Mary's bosom, who does not expect him to-day? Bethlehem did not expect him, and she did not hear the angels' song that sent the shepherds alone to his manger. We shall none of us ever see Christ until we strongly desire him. Would we make a Bethlehem in our hearts, we must see to it that they are not, instead of that humble place, the noisy cities of worldly care and covetousness. While we allow them to be filled with strangers, Mary will find no room there. Christ was born in a manger: rude walls and ill-furnished accommodations met his infant eyes. The soul must know itself to be a manger—a needy, ill-supplied, homely, and unfurnished spot—before Christ will be welcomed to a birthplace within it. Yes! to drop all figure, Christ comes only to the want of the soul. We shall know him, love him, feel his saving power, the glory and the blessedness of his birth in our souls, only when we heartily desire him, when all we have seems

poor, and all we are, weak, and all we hope, uncertain and uninviting. Then when, with eager expectation, with sincere longing, with soul-wrung desire, like unto that with which the ancient handmaids and sons of Judea waited for the consolation of Israel, we prepare our hearts for our Saviour, he will come in the sweetness and beauty of his innocency,—ay, in the power and plenitude of his truth,—and make every woman another Mary, every man another Joseph, every house another Bethlehem; and new Annas shall prophesy and speak of him to all that look for redemption in Israel, and new Simeons bless God and say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."—*H. W. Bellows.*

THE SHEPHERDS,

"There is one passage in the Mishnah which throws such peculiar light on the gospel narrative that it will be best to give it in its entirety. We know that on the night in which our Saviour was born the angels' message came to those who probably alone of all in or near Bethlehem were 'keeping watch.' For close by Bethlehem, on the road to Jerusalem, was a tower known as *Migdal Eder*, the 'watch-tower of the flock.' For here was the station where shepherds watched the flocks destined for sacrifices in the temple. So well known was this that, if animals were found as far from Jerusalem as *Migdal Eder*, and within that circuit on every side, the males were offered as burnt-offerings, the females as peace-offerings. Rabbi Jehudah adds, 'If suited for Paschal sacrifices, then they are Paschal sacrifices, provided it be not more than thirty days before the feast.' It seems of the deepest significance, almost like the fulfilment of types, that those shepherds who first heard tidings of the Saviour's birth, who first listened to angels' praises, were watching flocks destined to be offered as sacrifices in the Temple.

"But this is not all. It is when we remember that presently these shepherds would be in the Temple, and meet those who came thither to worship and to sacrifice that we perceive the full significance of what otherwise would hardly be worth

noticing in connection with humble shepherds.

"And, when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds."

"Moreover, we can understand the wonderful impression made on those in the courts of the temple, as, while they selected their sacrifices, the shepherds told the devout of the speedy fulfilment of all these types in what they had themselves seen and heard in that night of wonders; how eager, curious crowds might gather around, to discuss, to wonder, perhaps to mock; how the heart of 'just and devout' old Simeon would be gladdened within him in expectation of the near realization of a life's hopes and prayers; and how aged Anna, and they who, like her, 'looked for redemption in Israel,' would lift up their heads, since their salvation was drawing nigh. Thus the shepherds would be the most effectual heralds of the Messiah in the temple, and both Simeon and Anna be prepared for the time when the infant Saviour would be presented in the sanctuary.

"But there is yet another verse, which, as we may suggest, would find a fuller explanation in the fact that these shepherds tended the Temple flocks. When in Luke ii. 20 we read that 'the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God,' the meaning in that connection seems somewhat difficult until we realize that, after bringing their flocks to the Temple, they would return to their own homes, and carry with them, joyfully and gratefully, tidings of the great salvation.

"Lastly, without entering into controversy, the passage from the Mishnah in great measure disposes of the objection against the traditional date of our Lord's birth, derived from the supposed fact that the rains of December would prevent the flocks being kept all night 'in the field.' For, in the first place, these were flocks on their way to Jerusalem, and not regularly pasturing in the open, at that season. And, secondly, the Mishnah evidently contemplates their being thus, in the open, thirty days before the Passover, or in the month of February, during which the average rainfall is quite the largest in the year."—*Edersheim, "Sketches of Jewish Social Life."*

In fact, the Mishnah expressly forbids the keeping of flocks throughout the land of Israel, except in the wildernesses; and the only flocks otherwise kept would be those for the Temple service.

Accordingly, the shepherds who watched over them (the flocks mentioned by Luke) were not ordinary shepherds. The latter were under the ban of Rabbinism, on account of their necessary isolation from religious ordinances, and their manner of life, which rendered strict legal observance unlikely, if not absolutely impossible.—*Edersheim, "Life and Times of Jesus."*

THE BIBLE CLASS.

[We have not received answers to the questions on the Genuineness of the Gospels, printed in October. We therefore give in this number an extract from Furness, which contains his view. The answers of Norton and Huidekoper will be printed later. We invite cordially further communication, either original or containing the arguments of other writers. All matter for this department may be sent to Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.]

In regard to the absence of collateral evidence of the existence of any written records of Christ before the second century, there are certain considerations which furnish, I conceive, good reasons for believing that such accounts existed long before that time, well-nigh coincidently with the events narrated, and which explain also why no notices have been found of their existence before the second century.

Written accounts must have existed before that time, although we have no notice of them, for the simple reason that only thirty years after the death of Christ, as Tacitus informs us, there were in Rome—and Rome was then a great way off from Judea—a vast multitude of Christians,—*multitudo ingens*. Is it credible that the Christians should have increased so rapidly, and become so numerous, and yet that never a word had been written about Christ, that for years nothing was known about him except by word of mouth, and that then, when the Gospels appeared, they were instantly accepted as true by the whole vast body of Christians, extending from Judea to Rome?

Now, observe: the Third Gospel begins by stating that many had taken in hand to write the story of his life, deriving their knowledge of it from eye and ear witnesses. The author of that Gospel states that he undertakes to write it, not because those many accounts were not true, but because they lacked orderly arrangement.

It is important to remark that the first two Gospels, and even the Third Gospel, bear every mark of being compilations of narratives previously existing.

The one pervading characteristic of these writings which impresses me deeply as the special and inimitable signature of Truth, as the very handwriting of Nature, is their absolute UNCONSCIOUSNESS. They admit, without any forcing, of being so read that they seem to be in seamless connection with our nature, and with all nature. And this wonderful consistency there is not the shadow of a hint of design on the part of the writers of producing. It comes of itself. They were not aware of it. They mention numerous places as the scenes of the incidents they relate, without a thought of the geographical truth which Renan found so remarkable. In like manner they tell us of Peter and Pilate, of Martha and Mary, what they said and did. The sun in the heavens is not more unconscious of what it is doing when it takes a photograph of the outer man than were the authors of the New Testament narratives when they were giving us portraits of the inmost characters of those individuals, so lifelike that we distinguish them at a glance, as if they were our familiar acquaintances.

And, most wonderful of all, the unprecedented, peerless character of Christ is portrayed in the same unconscious way. There is not a syllable of anything like a studied description of him. The writers merely relate incidents, his sayings and acts. There is hardly anything told of him that is not in harmony with his great character, and that does not positively illustrate it. He is represented in the most critical situations, and always he is himself, always master of them all.

And is it not most interesting to observe that the influence that wrought so powerfully upon his disciples as to effect in them a radical change was of the same unconscious character on his part? It was not

the influence of his verbal teachings, which they hardly understood, but the influence of his person that went straight to their very hearts, and inspired them with such reverence and love that they were ready to suffer everything for his sake.

Is it not, in this way, so characteristic of the Gospels of simply stating incidents, and of telling how certain persons bore themselves in connection therewith, that we are made acquainted with their personal qualities, with what strength or what weakness there was in them?

And is not the demonstration of the truth of any history complete when it is found to be thus self-consistent and all-consistent, and entirely without any design on the part of the narrator to create this consistency?

Gladly would I dwell upon certain illustrations of the internal evidence of the truth of the Gospels. But where should I begin or where end? * My conviction is strong that there is a rich mine of it yet to be explored. I live in the faith that the time is coming when our primitive Christian records will be understood and truly appreciated. Then will he of whom they tell cease to be the vague vision that he is now, and come forth as the most real of existences in all the power of his personality, at once as profoundly natural and human as it was original, and irradiate the world as no other has ever done, the realization of the grandest ideal of humanity, the living, God-given revelation of what every human being is created to become, as surely as the acorn is made to become an oak.

It is said that we cannot be sure that we have in any instance the exact words that Jesus uttered. This may well be affirmed on the supposition that the Gospels were not written until years after he lived. But if, as I have sought to show, they have every appearance of being composed of narratives (more or less imperfect) which were well-nigh contemporaneous with the events narrated, then is there a particular and strong reason for believing that we have in a great measure the very words spoken by *Christ*, which so impressed themselves on those who heard them that they could not be forgotten.

* See this point brought out in Furness's other writings: "The History of Jesus," "Jesus and his Biographers," "Unconscious Evidence of the Truth of the Four Gospels."

The reason is this: You all know how things spoken are stamped deeply on the memory *verbatim et literatim* when they are associated with particular circumstances which are the things by which you remember them.

Now, the sayings of Christ were precisely of this kind, suggested by and associated with circumstances. They are exclamatory and interrogative. So often are they of this character in the first three Gospels, so rarely are they abstract or didactic, that one cannot but think that the Sermon on the Mount, which has the look of a regular discourse, is more or less a compilation of the sayings of Christ upon various occasions.

That such was for the most part the character of his utterances was not due to a deliberate, predetermined design to adopt this style or method of instruction. So full was he of the truth, so completely did it possess him, that some suggestion of it occurred to him at every turn. Nothing could happen in his presence that did not cause the truth to gush forth and brim over in speech. He was in constant and intimate connection and fellowship with all nature and all life. All things had for him a spiritual significance. Angels ministered to him continually.

By the way, the Greek, from which the word "angel" comes, means, not a supernatural being, but simply a messenger. Dr. Channing, in his last moments, said that he was receiving many messages from the Spirit. In the language of Judea, eighteen hundred years ago, we should say that angels had come to him. But this aside.

The sayings of Christ being such as I have described, connected with visible objects and incidents, and the fact attested by familiar experience that sayings thus associated rivet themselves on the mind, have we not good grounds for believing that the very words of Christ have come down to us from the dialect which he used? All the translations that have been made of them agree in their meaning and spirit.

Furthermore, there are things reported in the Gospels as said by Christ which the reporters did not understand; and which, indeed (wonderful to tell), have not been understood to this very hour.

For example, the people among whom

Christ appeared believed that the extraordinary influence which he had over the sick and infirm was due to a peculiar medicinal gift resident in his person, and which was so powerful that it was communicated to his garments, to his bare shadow. Christ himself laid claim to no such gift. He declared over and over again, in terms the most explicit, that those alleged miracles were wrought by God, and, as God always works, by a law, by an indisputable law of human nature, by faith, by the influence of mind, of spirit, over the flesh, over matter.

Is it not amazing that to this day we have suffered ourselves to be so blinded by the mechanical theory of the universe as not only to regard the extraordinary physical effects wrought by Christ as violations of natural laws, but to maintain that they were necessary as such in order to prove his divine authority, when it stands to reason that it is not by breaking, but by obeying the laws of nature—only another name for the laws of God—that a man is clothed with the highest possible authority? Why, have we not seen that Christ himself indicated in the plainest, possible manner the law by which the alleged suspensions of the divine laws were wrought? Verily, our eyes have been holden.

After all, why, may it be asked, is so much importance to be attached to a faith in the credibility of the Gospels and in Christ himself? Is not his spirit abroad in the earth, silently breathing a humanizing influence in countless ways into the hearts of men, through commerce, which brings them face to face as brothers, through the cherished memories of sainted men and women, through countless humane institutions? It is surely so. It would be to dishonor Christ to think that he had lived and died in vain. His spirit is one with the inscrutable, all-ruling Power, which even science, calling it the Conservation of Force, pronounces indestructible. The spirit of Christ can never die, never cease to be active in the re-creation of mankind.

Granting all this, there is no agency, no factor, working to this high end, to be compared in power with character, personal character. So powerful is it that it has been said that the history of the world is the history of a few great men. Yes, this grand,

advancing Christendom is the biography of Him whom this season commemorates, not to be concluded till God is all in all in the fulness of his all-conquering love.

He is yet far from being appreciated in the perfection, the divineness, of his human nature. Thus far only the one great, crowning event of his life, his self-sacrifice on the cross, has been felt with some approach to its full power. The clouds of error that have gathered round him could not hide in that event his simple, suffering, human nature. That has converted the grim cross into our most sacred symbol,—symbol of faith, of love, of power. But not his death alone, the history of his whole public life illustrates the same great qualities, his unconquerable faith, his profound humanity. Throughout he commands our admiring trust and love. His person is full, full to overflowing, of the same soul-moving power which it had at the first. When once it is seen that the New Testament story is no legend, but a veritable history, and we gather from it a clearly defined idea of the Lord Jesus, and we behold in him a revelation of God in man, then, as no other ever has done, he will call into life wonder, veneration, faith, adoring, undying love. Drawn to him by these powerful sentiments, the central springs, the dynamic forces of human nature, we shall recognize him, as I said in the beginning, as our next of kin, under God.

No more will it then be questioned whether life be worth the living. No more will men, having found the pearl of great price, go searching for the living fountain in the far-off Orient. No more will they, having in Christ the prophecy and the pledge of better things, even of the Divine in man, and of his immortal destiny, hearken to a philosophy, so called, that teaches that all is tending not to the better, but to the worse. Ah! no, we shall learn, with the immortal poet, to find a soul of goodness in things evil, and to accept life with all its sins and sufferings as a priceless gift, a discipline which, however severe it may be, is a cheap price for the glory to be revealed in us, a glory beyond all that eye hath seen, or ear heard, or it hath entered into the heart of man to conceive.—*W. H. Furness, A Christmas Discourse.*

THE CLASS IN AMERICAN HISTORY.

QUESTIONS FOR DECEMBER.

19. Give the names and captains of the vessels of Columbus.
20. Which of the captains deserted him?
21. How many days did his voyage last?
22. Give any incidents you may know of his voyage?
23. Who first saw land?
24. What was the first land?
25. What name did Columbus bestow upon it?
26. Did Columbus ever reach the continent of North America?
27. Is he not believed to have landed on the coast of South America?
28. Can you name any points?
29. Does any part of South America bear his name?
30. Give some account of his reception on his return.
31. How many voyages did he make in all?
32. What is known of the causes of his disgrace?
33. When and where did he die?
34. Where is he most probably buried?

[Send answers to Miss S. Minns, 14 Louisburg Square, Boston, Mass., by January 1, if possible.]

We will add to the list of books already given T. W. Higginson's "American Explorers," perhaps the best book for the purpose that can be obtained. It is not very large nor expensive. It is a companion to the History of the United States by the same author. Each of these books may be bought for \$1.00, and is published by Lee & Shepard, Milk Street, Boston.

A good paper-covered sketch of "The Life and First Voyage of Columbus" is sold by D. C. MacDonald, Milton Place, Boston. The print is good, and the illustrations make it attractive. Another good and not expensive Life of Columbus is sold by D. Lothrop & Co., Boston. Higginson's History of the United States is one of the best for this purpose, containing accounts of the aboriginal inhabitants of America (which the old school histories do not always have) and having good illustrations.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

QUESTIONS FOR DECEMBER.

How to teach children unselfishness.

Is it reasonable to expect an older child always to yield to a younger one?

How far is the present method of keeping Christmas good for children? And what are the objections to it, if any?

How can we teach children the pleasure of giving? and how far is it best to do so?

I have three little ones now, old enough to begin to learn. I am too far from school to send them, so must teach them at home. Can some of the experienced mothers tell me what to begin with? Would kindergarten books be good? and has some one such books to dispose of, that her children have outgrown?

I wish some of the overworked mothers would try dressing baby in short dresses from the first. I tried it on all my four, and it saves a great deal of work and cloth, too. I put on flannel shirts and skirts and wool socks; and they never catch cold and are never sick, and seem so happy and good. I think the free use of the arms and legs keeps up the circulation, so they are warm and comfortable; and they kick for exercise instead of crying.

If you want baby to sleep well at night, take him out in the sunshine and fresh air in the afternoon.—MRS. D. O. LAMB, Fallbrook, San Diego County, Cal.

In order to exert a lasting influence over children, you must have been disciplined yourself, or rather you must have disciplined yourself. Without self-discipline and self-control you will not be able to adjust the great general principles to the special cases. . . . There are people whose mere personal influence is an education in itself, because they have reached the height of self-development and self-culture. They teach and educate others by their unconscious example, and they seem able always to do the right thing at the right moment, not, as we often are tempted to say, by some lucky instinct, but by force of that quick decision which is an immediate result of quick perception and correct judgment,—qualities of a disciplined mind.—*Fanny Lewald's Autobiography*. (From the German.)

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all matter for this department to Mrs. J. B. Millet, 150 Charles Street, Boston, Mass.]

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR GIVERS AND RECEIVERS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'In His Name,'" etc., not, "I have received *that book*." This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

Any one who can send copies of the *Century*, the *Atlantic*, *Harper's Magazine*, *New England Magazine*, *Babyhood* (*Mother's Nursery Guide*), *Babyland*, the *Pansy*, *St. Nicholas*, *Harper's Young People*, *Wide Awake*, the *Christian Register*, *Christian Union*, or any good weekly or monthly periodical, will confer a favor by addressing the Book Club as above.

N.B.—Do not send *books* to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

OFFERS.

I have a number of copies of *Babyhood* that I should be glad to send to young mothers who would like help in bringing up their little ones. Address Mrs. H. C. Barnes, 10 Linden Place, Quincy, Mass.

The *Ladies' Home Journal* for a year or more is offered by Mrs. R. H. Guild, 43 Moreland Street, Roxbury, Mass.

I should be glad to send the *Youth's Companion* regularly to some mother for her children. I also have some back numbers

which I will send. Address Mrs. Thomas L. Johnson, 171 Kennard Street, Cleveland, Ohio.

I have a copy of the *Ladies' Home Journal* which I will send monthly to any one who desires it. Address Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.

Will you please ask in the *Cheerful Letter* if any teacher would like a copy of the *Journal of Education*, as we can send one after reading? Address Mrs. E. A. Fifield, 4 Ashland Street, Dorchester, Mass.

I have *Housekeeper* for some one who needs it. Address Mrs. D. O. Lamb, Fallbrook, San Diego Co., California.

I take *Vick's Monthly Magazine*, which I should be glad to send, after reading, to any one interested in flower culture. Miss S. R. Barker, 26 Fifth Street, Bangor, Me.

I have some copies of "Extracts from the Sermons of James Freeman Clarke," which I would send to any invalid, or to any one who would like to have them. Also the three sermons on the future life: "What God gives He gives Forever," "Homes in Heaven and on Earth," "The Old and New View of the Hereafter," bound in one volume. Address Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Mrs. William Cook, 71 Appleton Street, Cambridge, Mass., offers the following books: "Young Folks' History of the United States"; "Robert Elsmere"; "Martin Chuzzlewit," "Edwin Drood," "History of England," by Dickens; "Pendennis," "Henry Esmond," "Four Georges," by Thackeray; "Lucy Maria"; "Swiss Family Robinson"; Hillard's "Fifth Reader"; Monroe's "Fifth Reader"; "Patty Gray's Journey"; "Aspendale"; "A Quaker Home"; "Red Carl"; "Philistinism"; "Joshua," by Georg Ebers; "Madame Tabby's Establishment"; "Toto's Merry Winter"; "Fate of Mansfield Humphreys"; "Childhood of the World"; "Evolution and Religion," 2 vols., by H. W. Beecher; "Kidnapped," by R. L. Stevenson; "The Merry Men"; "King Solomon's Mines"; "A Girton Girl"; "Well Won"; "The Last of the Mohicans"; "Miss Nobody of Nowhere"; "Aunt Diana"; "The Gates Ajar"; "The

Moorland Cottage"; "The Little Duke"; the *Juvenile Miscellany*, 10 numbers; "Rachel Ford"; the Sunday-school Garland Stories; *Atlantic Monthly*, complete, from 1884-90; *Scribner's*, complete, for 1890; *Century* for 1887; *Littell's Living Age*, 1889-91, 62 numbers; *Littell's Living Age*, 67 odd numbers; *Every Saturday*, complete, for 1867; *Every Saturday*, incomplete, for 1868; *St. Nicholas*, complete, for 1888; *Scribner's*, incomplete, for 1877; *Our Little Ones* for 1892; *Every Other Saturday*, 1891-92, 27 numbers; *Christian Register*, 1891-92, 27 numbers; *Christian Register*, 1888-90, 57 numbers; *Youth's Companion*, 1875-91; *Pall Mall Budget*, 1891; *Wide Awake*, 1883-85, 35 numbers; *Scientific American*, 1888-89; *Babyland*, odd numbers; odd numbers of *Harper's Monthly*, *Forum*, and others, 75 numbers.

REQUESTS.

I have been both blessed and edified by receiving reading matter from a kind lady of Chestnut Hill, Mass. With the rest came a copy of *The Cheerful Letter* for June (No. 1). I see by that you are disposed to circulate books to the needy. I come under that head, as I am situated in a very remote part of Cumberland Mountain, entirely out of the reach of books and libraries. I will ask you to send me a copy of "Stepping Heavenward" and "The Chaplet of Pearls." May they be mine? I would like to read them to my poor neighbors that cannot read, and lend them to others that can. Mrs. Lavinia Pearson, Pearson, Bledsoe Co., Tenn.

("Stepping Heavenward" has been promised.)

Mrs. John Morgan, Dunlor, Whitman Co., Wash., asks for the *Household* or the *Housekeeper* or such magazines.

Mrs. C. S. Stowell, Magnolia, Boulder Co., Col., asks for the *Cosmopolitan*; also for "Old Town Folks," "We and our Neighbors," "My Wife and I," by H. B. Stowe.

(Mrs. Stowell lends books to a circle of readers.)

Sarah A. Lloyd, Barr, Col., the *Household*.

Mrs. S. E. Jackson, St. Francis, Kan., any books or papers.

F. R. Strong, Scannill, Ransom Co., N. Dak., the *Christian Register*.

Mrs. Mary W. Tyner, 916 North Ninth Street, Lincoln, Neb., any books or papers.

(These all will lend or pass on what they receive to others.)

I live in a lonely country place distant from any library. I am so fond of reading, but am not able to subscribe for reading matter. I would be so glad if some one could send me the *Chautauquan*, *Century*, *Union Signal*, or *Housekeeper's Weekly* regularly each month after reading. I will return postage on them; also, if any one will send the book "In His Name," I will read and return or hand it to others. Mellie J. Snyder, Brush Valley, Ind. Co., Penn.

If any sisters have *Harper's Magazine* or *Harper's Young People* to spare, I would be glad to read them, and pass them on to some other lonely sister. Mrs. D. O. Lamb, Fallbrook, San Diego Co., Cal.

(Please send both requests and offers exactly as you wish them inserted in the Book Club, otherwise they must be altered more or less in copying.)

I was glad that you thought I could be a member of the Cheerful Letter Exchange, for I do want some reading, and I know some poor women that like to read, but cannot afford to buy it, that I could pass it along to. Anything will be gladly accepted. I think *The Cheerful Letter* lovely. I found a little piece in one of them that I read to our Society of Christian Endeavor. I have found a great many good things in *The Cheerful Letter*; and I see any one can ask questions, so I will ask one. How can we keep young men or boys from sixteen to twenty-one in Sabbath school?

Do you think any one would have "Hearts-ease" or "David Elginbrod" they would let me have to read? If so, they would greatly oblige me. Mrs. C. E. Deuel, South Tren-ton, N. Y.

(If you have either of these books to give or to lend, write a postal card to the secretary of the Book Club (address given above), and offer it. If it has not been offered already, you will receive an answer, asking you to send it to Mrs. Deuel. If it has been offered, you will receive no answer; but *your* offer will be printed in the next number of the Book Club.)

I have about fifty books, which were sent me from a public library. They are con-

demned,—that is, soiled or leaves gone,—but in the most of them the story is complete. I would like to send them to you or to the Book Club. They could send them to some light-house or give them to poor children, if some one will pay express. I will put them in a box and send to you, or where you say. I am *very, very* much pleased with the friends in *The Cheerful Letter*. Address Mrs. Ida A. Junkins, York Corner, Maine.

(We are obliged to decline this very kind offer, but print the note, as our answer will be a condensed response to similar offers.

1. Books are sent direct from the giver to the receiver. Only the *offer* is made in our club.

2. The express or postage is paid by the sender of the book. We have no fund for this purpose; and, besides, it is usually better not to incur the expense and trouble of *two* journeys, when one will suffice.

3. There may be *individuals* who would like to avail themselves of Mrs. Junkins's kindness, and to send postage for the books, or some of them. In that case, they may address Mrs. Junkins directly.

4. We will suggest that, in offering a book or books, it adds to the attraction to mention, when possible, the names of the books offered.)

Mrs. Maria Souther, West Levant, Me. (Box 5), would be glad to have pamphlet books, "1,100 Tales," published every Saturday, if any one can send after reading. Also would like a paper for Sunday reading. (She has the *Christian Register*.)

OFFER.

Miss Dresel, 328 Beacon Street, Boston, will send any of the following books (give, not lend): "Pax Vobiscum," Drummond; "Young Folks' History of the United States," Higginson; "Knight Errant," Edna Lyall; "Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea," Jules Verne; "Tragedy of Ida Noble," "The Frozen Pirate," "Romance of Jenny Harlowe," W. Clarke Russell; "Consequences," Egerton Castle; "Crusade of the Excelsior," Bret Harte; "Allan Quatermain," Rider Haggard; "Strange Adventures of a House-boat," Black; "The Iron Game: A Tale of the War," Henry F. Keenan; "The Residuary Legatee," J. S. of Dale; "Part of the Property," Beatrice Whitby.

Will the lady who wrote to Miss Dresel, Beverly, from Milton, Mass., kindly send the name and address of her friend in Mat-tapan (?), who desired the *Nation* and the *Christian Register*, to the Book Club, *Cheerful Letter*? Mrs. J. B. Millet, 150 Charles Street, Boston.

Miss Dresel unfortunately mislaid the letter with addresses, but had already sent her copies of the papers mentioned else where, and now hopes that the Book Club may be able to supply them.

MISCELLANEOUS.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

[The editor is sorry that she is unable to reply personally to all letters received, but it has become impossible. She takes this opportunity of giving an answer at once to several writers who ask the same question.]

"Do you want original poetry for *The Cheerful Letter*?"

Answer. Usually not. Our paper is very small, and goes to many houses where books are not easily obtained. It answers our purpose better, therefore, to make use of selections from the best authors. Where stamps are sent with a contribution, it will be returned if not used: otherwise, it is destroyed.

"Will you kindly tell me if I can borrow the books on Columbus?"

Answer. Ask for them or for any you desire in the Book Club of *The Cheerful Letter*. We hope that some of the circles of our *Cheerful Letter* Exchange will make a point of keeping these books on hand to lend to the students of American history.

"Are the books received to be kept or returned?"

Answer. Unless otherwise specified, they are to be kept. It is hoped that, where possible, they will be made useful by being lent in the neighborhood.

"Will you send me the address of some one who would like a file of the — *Magazine* for 1891?"

Answer. Offer it in the Book Club. By that means several hundred people see the offer. It would be difficult for us to know which of our shut-ins lack that particular magazine.

"What contributions do you desire for *The Cheerful Letter*?"

Answer. First and most, we desire letters from our far-off correspondents, telling us something about themselves, letters that we may print in *The Cheerful Letter*, signed with the name of the writer.

Next, we want short articles, answering the questions in the Mothers' Council, and on the questions in the Book Club.

Third, we want more of our *Cheerful Letter* Exchange members to offer books in the Book Club, especially good books on American history.

"How do you know, when a request for a book has been made by a shut-in, whether she has received it or not?"

Answer. We do not know unless the giver sends the secretary a P.O. card, offering to send that book, or stating that she has sent it (we should prefer the former). We have asked several times that this should be done.

We make the following suggestions to members of the *Cheerful Letter* Exchange.

In sending a bound book through the mail, wrap it up carefully in several thicknesses of paper: protect the corners, if possible. One thin piece of paper is not enough.

Keep your correspondents supplied with P.O. cards. By this we mean not only send one card or envelope when you send a book or letter, but send a few extra cards, so that they may be able to write a request for a book which they see in *The Cheerful Letter*. Many of our shut-ins are too remote from a post-office to have the opportunity often to buy cards or stamps; and many lack even the very few cents that they need to provide the means of writing. A P.O. card at hand is a real convenience.

We give below some hints for those who wish to send little gifts to their correspondents, or to other friends. This is by no means a full list, but may be useful so far as it goes.

A little box of stationery is a most acceptable gift to an invalid, and postage-stamps are always in request.

The beautiful unmounted photographs, of which there is a large collection at Soule's, 338 Washington Street, Boston, make charming Christmas cards. Price 15 cents.

"Lill's Withered Hand." A charming

short story in tract form. American Tract Society. Price 2 cents.

"The Deacon's Week." Tract form. The Congregational House, Boston. 5 cents.

"The Man without a Country," E. E. Hale (paper cover). 25 Beacon Street, Boston. 20 cents.

"In His Name," E. E. Hale. 25 Beacon Street. 25 cents.

"Three Sermons on the Future Life," by James Freeman Clarke. "What God gives He gives Forever," and two others. 25 Beacon Street. 25 cents.

"Where Love is, there is God," Tolstoi. D. Lothrop. 25 cents.

"Stepping Heavenward." 15 cents.

Drummond's "Addresses" (bound prettily in beautiful print). 20 or 25 cents.

"A Sage of Sixteen," Mrs. Walford. 10 cents.

"Mademoiselle Ixe." 10 cents. The last four at De Wolfe & Fiske. Boston.

Novels.—"A Hardy Norseman," "We Two," "Donovan," etc., by Edna Lyall; "Tale of Two Cities" and others of Dickens's novels. Houghton & Dutton's. 8 to 17 cents.

"Cranford," and several of Miss Yonge's novels, at New England News Co., Franklin Street, Boston. 10 or 20 cents a volume, according to size.

"The Scarlet Letter," Hawthorne, may be bought now for 20 and 25 cents.

Will members of the Cheerful Letter Exchange who are willing to send their copy of *The Cheerful Letter* to a shut-in, or one not able to subscribe for it, send their names to Miss Ellen R. Dewson, Quincy, Mass., who will keep in future a list of all senders of *The Cheerful Letter*?

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Dewson as above. Please give full name and address. Many of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.

What do the members think of having a children's department? Some one has suggested that we should have members from five to eighteen years old in our society, called "Sunbeams." Is this a good idea?

A friend has written to ask, "What constitutes a member of *The Cheerful Letter Exchange*?"

Answer.—To become a member of *The Cheerful Letter Exchange*, it is necessary:—

First, either to be a lonely person, an invalid, a young mother (or a mother of any age who feels enough interest to desire to join the society), or to be in sympathy with these, and desire to write letters, send reading, or cheer their lives in any way.

Second, to send your names to our secretary, Miss Langmaid, whose address is given above, saying that you desire to become a member.

It is also desirable (although not necessary for each individual) to take *The Cheerful Letter*, as this is the medium of communication.

Will all those friends who are now sending magazines or papers regularly to any one be kind enough to write to Miss Bertha Langmaid (2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.), giving the address of the recipient as well as the name of the periodical and of the sender? Otherwise, some one who asks for a paper, and does not receive it, may lose the opportunity, and we could obtain one for her by printing her request again; or one who offers may receive no immediate response, and could a month later still send the periodical offered.

Will those who write us letters mention whether they are willing that the signature of the writer should be inserted in the paper with the letter? We are sometimes in doubt, especially when the writer, although referring to *The Cheerful Letter*, writes to the editor in a friendly, personal, way. Such letters would often interest readers; and we like to make use of them when permitted.

Will all subscribers or receivers of *The Cheerful Letter*, whose copy does not come regularly, or comes not correctly addressed, be kind enough to notify Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass?

New Subscribers.—Please send subscriptions for the paper to Miss F. L. Close, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Articles for the paper may be sent for the present to Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.